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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

MONDAY, Jan. 29, 1934

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "Using Meat from Cans." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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You and I have often talked about meat in the menu. And we've also talked many times about using canned food. But as far as I can remember we never have happened to center our conversation on the best ways to use canned meat. Seems to me that's a bad oversight, since most households these days have canned meat at one time or another. I thought of this the other day when a friend of mine, whose husband is a mining engineer, told me that for three straight years she had to depend entirely on canned or salt meat when she lived way up in the mountains. She didn't speak of the experience as a hardship, either. Quite the contrary. She said, "Let me tell you, Aunt Sammy, that some of the dishes Jim and I learned to make with beef out of a can were treats for royalty. They really were. We used to make what we called 'divine stew'. We considered it good enough to deserve the name. Yes, and we called our corned beef hash--also out of a can--we called that 'heavenly hash'. I learned up in that mining camp why the British tommies in the War sang the praises of their 'bully beef' and why the American boys had such a fondness for their 'corn willie.'"

Well, people like this friend of mine who live off the beaten paths of civilization, people in isolated camps or far-away settlements of one sort or another have learned to depend on meat preserved for safe keeping by canning or drying or salting or smoking. Lack of refrigeration makes it impossible to keep fresh meat in many of these places even if they could get it. Armies, navies and expeditions of all sorts also have learned long ago to depend on preserved meat.

But what about these of us who live in town--perhaps just around the corner from the grocery and meat market? Well, even we find canned meat a great convenience now and then. Of course, we don't depend on it generally. But on a Sunday night, say, when the shops are all closed and some hungry guests drop in--on an occasion like that when there's an urgent need for a hearty, hot and hasty meal, the can of meat all ready and waiting on the pantry shelf is a friend in need. If you know how to fix up and serve this ready-cooked meat so it tastes its best and goes a long way, then you'll never be flustered by unexpected company and emergency meals.

You lucky folks who live on farms and do your own butchering and canning of course are always ready with meat to serve the aunts and cousins no matter when they drop in on you. Most farm housewives I know put up meat in cold weather and plan to use it chiefly in warm weather, to save cooking on hot days. But when they may need it just as much in January as in June for emergency meals.

Well, the latest news about canned meat is that the Government has a plan on foot for buying a big supply for relief purposes. One more useful food for the people who need help from Uncle Sam's generous market basket. And our friends the specialists over at the Bureau of Home Economics have been working out recipes for using this canned beef. I think you'll be interested in hearing what they say on the subject.

They say that whenever you use this meat from cans, you should remember not to overcook it. This is just another application of the good old rule that protein foods suffer from over cooking or from cooking at too high a temperature. That holds for eggs and cheese and fish as well as meat. Since canned beef has already had plenty of cooking in the can, you only need to heat it thoroughly before serving it. Another session of long cooking will cut down its good flavor--make it tasteless and unattractive.

Seems to me I hear a question coming in from the sidelines, don't I? Seems to me I hear somebody asking, "Well, if you aren't supposed to cook canned meat a long time, how can you use it in long-cooking recipes like stews?

Here's the answer to that question. You reverse the procedure used in making ordinary stews. You put the canned meat in last instead of first. Cook the vegetables or the cereal until practically done. Then put in the meat and cook just long enough to heat it through. Of course, canned meat saves cooking time in many of these long-cooking dishes.

To add extra flavor to the various dishes made from canned beef, you can't do better than those old stand-by vegetables for inexpensive seasoning-tomatoes and onions. Tomatoes have the added advantage of providing extra liquid if your canned beef dish tends to be dry. The specialists tell me that cans of beef put up at home generally contain more juice than the commercially canned. So you may need tomatoes more with the beef you buy in cans than with that you put up yourself.

The specialists have worked out seven new recipes for canned beef--seven extra-good, easy and low-cost recipes. One that caught my eye first was brown hash cakes. You mold little flat cakes from a mixture of chopped beef, mashed potatoes, chopped onion and seasoning. They you fry the cakes slowly on both sides until they're brown and crusty.

If you have a can of corned beef, try some panned cabbage and corned beef. Cabbage goes in first; beef last. Put some shredded cabbage in a covered pan with a little butter or other fat. Let it steam for ten minutes or so. Then add the corned beef, broken into small pieces. Heat thoroughly and season with salt, pepper and a little vinegar.

Hot beef and onion sandwich is another good idea for canned beef. If you want a one-dish meal, how about beef and vegetable stew with dumplings? Or beef scallop made with chopped beef, tomatoes, onion and some cereal like rice or hominy grits? How about a tamali pie--chopped meat between layers of hot corn meal mush? Or, perhaps best of all, a delicious beef-and-turnip pie? We're featuring beef and turnip pie in today's economy menu. Here's the menu in just three items: Beef and turnip pie; Bowl of cabbage and

peanut salad; Peach tapioca for dessert. Once more: Beef and turnip pie; Cabbage and peanut salad; Peach tapioca for dessert.

Now about the menu for beef and turnip pie: Cook one quart of diced turnips tender in one quart of boiling salted water. Thicken with flour mixed with cold water. Add 1 pint of cut-up canned beef, and pour into a shallow pan or baking dish. Cover with a thick biscuit dough, or cut the dough into biscuits and place the biscuits close together over the top of the beef-and-turnip mixture. Bake in a hot oven until the crust is golden brown.

Tomorrow is our usual question and answer day.